

# SECONDARY

## EXAMINATIONS

### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

#### NCE EXAMINATIONS - VACANT SEATS

(13.07.2021)

(No. B/647) **Dr. M. Gungapersad** (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to the National Certificate of Education Examinations, she will state the number of seats vacant in regional schools after the admission of students in Grade 10 in the twelve Academies.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to inform the House that as at 21 June 2021, out of 2,160 seats allocated at Grade 10 in the twelve Academies, 1,935 have been filled. Consequently, there are 1,935 vacant seats in regional secondary schools.

**Dr. Gungapersad:** Is the hon. Minister aware that in a few regional secondary schools, at least 50 to 60 students have been transferred to Academies, leaving behind vacant seats. Will the Ministry be contemplating the idea of filling these vacant seats?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, research has shown that the smaller the class size, the greater the teaching and learning effectiveness. So, Mr Speaker, Sir, we are planning to move on to smaller class sizes with a better and enhanced teacher-pupil ratio and this is why, we do not intend to fill up these seats.

**Dr. Gungapersad:** Lateral transfer is in our culture, hon. Minister, and the schools where we have these 50 or 60 vacant seats are high-demand regional secondary schools and I do not think if we fill the vacant seats, we are going to have a decline in quality of education there.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the very spirit of the reform is that all schools graduate to schools of excellence. So, I think that when a school has prepared the student and the student has got good results, it is not fair to allow the students to move out of the school to another school. What we intend to do is to ensure that all schools manage to grow and become high-demand schools and not feed only few high-demand schools.

## **SECONDARY EXAMINATIONS**

### **ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS SC & HSC EXAMINATIONS - GRADES (18.05.2021)**

(No. B/415) **Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to the cancellation of the examinations of the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate scheduled to be held on 28 April 2021, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Examination Syndicate, information as to how special consideration will be applied in the calculation of the final grades in respect of each of the subjects concerned therewith.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun):** Mr Speaker, Sir, according to established protocol, all educational institutions remain closed whenever the issue of a torrential rain warning by the Mauritius Meteorological Services is issued.

In this regard, when the torrential rain alert was issued on 27 April 2021 at 16.30 hours with flooding and water accumulation are expected across the island and the suspension of the public transportation on 28 April 2021, it was announced that the SC and HSC Examinations scheduled for that day would not be held. Cambridge Assessment International Examinations was immediately informed of the prevailing situation whereby candidates would not be able to sit for the papers scheduled on 28 April 2021.

The papers scheduled on that day were English Language, German and Arabic for the School Certificate Examination and Design and Textiles, Design and Technology, Hindi, Hindi Literature, Urdu, Marathi Tamil and Telugu and Chinese for the Higher School Certificate. Cambridge Assessment International Examinations informed the MES that it has an established mechanism whereby special considerations apply in some exceptional and adverse circumstances.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the special consideration is a post-exam adjustment which Cambridge International Examinations makes to a candidate's mark if the candidate

misses one or more papers in a given subject, provided he has taken at least one paper in that subject. The reasons for this special consideration can be varied –

- illness;
- temporary injury;
- disruption of an examination as a result of a pandemic;
- cyclonic weather;
- earthquakes etc.

In case a candidate is absent from a paper, Cambridge International Examinations will calculate and give an assessed mark for the missing paper, based on the candidates performance in the remaining papers in that subject and on the performance of all other CIE candidates worldwide in the same papers.

For example, for the case of English Language whereby there are two Papers, given that all candidates of Mauritius have missed Paper One on 28 April, the performance of the candidates in the subject would be based on the marks scored in Paper Two and the performance of all candidates worldwide in these same papers.

It is worth pointing out that the special considerations could not be applied for the Hindi Literature paper, advanced subsidiary level, as it is the only paper for that subject. The paper was rescheduled for 14 May 2021.

For the Design and Technology paper, IY, which is a carried forward option, Cambridge International has informed the MES that, as per their regulations, a calculated assessment cannot be effected, based on course works submitted by candidates in another exam series, that is, in October/November 2019. The paper was rescheduled on 12 May 2021 and all the candidates took the paper.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Cambridge International has reassured the MES that candidates will be treated in all fairness as per their established procedures.

**Dr. Gungapersad:** Thank you, hon. Minister. In the past, whenever a student is not happy with his/her SC or HSC results, they normally go for remarking etc. What will happen in this case now?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, whenever a student feels that he is not satisfied with his marks, he has always the possibility of asking for a remarking.

# SECONDARY

## EXAMINATIONS

### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

### PSAC, NEC, SC & HSC INVIGILATORS

(11.05.2021)

(No. B/327) **Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand'Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to the invigilators working for the Primary School Achievement Certificate, National Certificate of Education, Cambridge School Certificate and Higher School Certificate examinations, respectively, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, information as to the mode of recruitment thereof, indicating the respective hourly rates payable thereto.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate carries out, on a yearly basis, a survey among Educators of Primary and Secondary Schools in regard to their interest in working as Invigilators for –

- (a) the Primary School Achievement Certificate (PSAC) assessment;
- (b) the National Certificate of Education (NCE) assessment, and
- (c) School Certificate (SC) and Higher School Certificate (HSC) examinations.

For the PSAC assessment, the Deputy Head Masters, Holistic Support Teachers and ICT teachers are also included in the survey.

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards the NCE assessment and SC and HSC examinations, in addition to educators of secondary, unemployed persons are also selected to work as invigilators.

Interested candidates are required to submit, in person, to MES the duly filled in application form which needs to be signed in the presence of MES officers.

Candidates have to, *inter alia*, meet the following conditions to be considered as eligible as invigilators. They should be –

- (a) aged between 22 and 70 years;
- (b) be unemployed or retired from the service;
- (c) have a pass in at least one subject at SC/GCE ‘O’ level, and (d) have a Certificate of character.

Following a screening exercise, the eligible candidates are added to the list of potential invigilators, from which selection and enlistment is made by the MES.

With regard to the remuneration, invigilators working for the PSAC assessment are paid an allowance of Rs2,844 for the whole exercise, that is, for the four days of the examinations.

For NCE assessment and SC and HSC examinations, a daily allowance of Rs486 is paid to the invigilators.

**Dr. Gungapersad:** Thank you, hon. Minister for the information you provided. The gist of this question is to highlight the fact that when a mathematical calculation is made, it is noted that invigilators working for PSAC and those who invigilate for NCE, SC and HSC exams do not receive the same quantum for the invigilation exercise, for hourly invigilation. Either way, we noted how a huge number of prospective invigilators refuse to work notwithstanding COVID-19. Will the hon. Minister look into the matter and see whether there is a possibility to rationalise the hourly quantum paid to all these invigilators?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** I will convey this point to the MES, Mr Speaker, Sir.

# SECONDARY

## EXAMINATIONS

### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

#### PSAC, NCE, SC & HSC EXAMINATIONS 2021 – COVID-19 POSITIVE STUDENTS

(20.04.2021)

(No. B/240) **Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to the Primary School Achievement Certificate, the National Certificate of Education, the Cambridge School Certificate and Higher School Certificate Examinations 2021, she will state the number of – (a)

students who –

- (i) could not/cannot take part therein on account of being tested Covid-19 positive, and
  - (ii) took part/are taking part therein in quarantine centres, and
- (b) supervisors, coordinators, markers and invigilators who were tested Covid-19 positive and/or were admitted in quarantine centres as a result of contact tracing exercises.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that a total of 19 students were tested positive for COVID-19 and were on treatment. As such, they could not sit for their respective examinations. The breakdown is as follows –

|   |       |   |             |
|---|-------|---|-------------|
| • | PSAC  | - | 2 students  |
| • | NCE   | - | 9 students  |
| • | SC    | - | 4 students  |
| • | HSC   | - | 4 students  |
|   | Total | - | 19 students |

As for part (a) (ii) of the question, 53 candidates were admitted in quarantine centres. Arrangements were made for them to sit for their examinations within a designated quarantine

examination centre under strict health, sanitary and examination conditions. This group of 53 candidates comprised 16 students from PSAC, 15 NCE students, 17 candidates for SC, and 5 for HSC.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in reply to part (b) of the question, one designated supervisor for the HSC examinations was tested COVID-19 positive. He was involved in a briefing session prior to the start of the examinations and as a result, six invigilators were quarantined.

As regards PSAC examination, one invigilator was found to be COVID-positive following a random test effected in Highlands. The result was obtained on the evening of 06 April and one reader has been placed in quarantine and the first two PCR tests carried out were negative.

**Dr. Gungapersad:** Thank you, hon. Minister. Like me, you must also have taken cognizance of the fact that there are around 1000 PSAC and 400 NCE students, apart from those you have mentioned, who did not take part in the exams, mainly because of the fear of contracting the virus. Can you inform the House if the MES has planned any resit for these students so that they are not penalised in whatsoever way, and if yes, when will these exams be held?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the MES has not decided yet upon this particular issue, but one thing is for sure that one can only resit for an exam if that student has taken part in the exam. You cannot have a resit if you have not taken part in the exams.

**Dr. Gungapersad:** Since we are at it, hon. Minister, kindly inform the House when will the PSAC and NCE results be made official?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** The NCE results would be made official by most probably the end of May. And I would like, Mr Speaker, Sir, if you allow me, to state that when we talk about PSAC students, out of the 1105 students who were mentioned not to have sat for the exams, 200 students were, in fact, school candidates, the remaining ones were private candidates, or candidates from secondary schools, attempting PSAC.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question!

## SECONDARY

### EXAMINATIONS

#### MATTERS RAISED

#### SC EXAMINATIONS - FEES

(06.04.2021)

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** Ma deuxième requête concerne le paiement des frais d'examen pour le SC. Un des critères...

**Mr Speaker:** This is a specific matter!

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** ...pour bénéficier des subsides...

**Mr Speaker:** I think you are being confused! You are confusing yourself!

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** ... est le taux de présence de l'étudiant pendant l'année.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Member, I suspend the Sitting for some minutes!

*At 4.30 p.m., the Sitting was suspended.*

*On resuming at 4.38 p.m. with Mr Speaker in the Chair.*

**Mr Speaker:** Please remain seated! MP Mrs Arianne Navarre-Marie!

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** Merci, M. le président, j'ai fait mon point. Je fais donc un appel à la ministre pour que les informations nécessaires, les informations appropriées soient transmises aux élèves et aux établissements scolaires concernant le *Kreol Morisien* aux examens de SC/HSC, et je fais également une requête à ce que les critères d'exemption, les critères de taux de présence...

**Mr Speaker:** This is a policy decision! You should know your Standing Orders, Madam! This is policy decision; it does not come within Adjournment matters! Bear with me! I am a human being like you! Next! I move on! Hon. Armance!

**Mr Armance:** Merci.

**An hon. Member:** *La ministre n'a pas répondu.*

**Mr Speaker:** If you want to reply Minister; I don't know what you are going to reply.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** To the first one.



**Mr Speaker:** I have already ruled!

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mais qu'est-ce qui se passe !

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Armance!

**Mr Armance:** She will reply?

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Armance! I move on! Hon. Lobine!

**Mr Armance:** I will intervene, Mr Speaker, Sir. It is ok. I was asking if she was going to answer.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Lobine! Hon. Lobine, go ahead!

# **SECONDARY**

## **EXAMINATIONS**

### **WRITTEN ANSWERS**

#### **STUDENT V. R. - CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS - FACILITIES**

**(30.03.2021)**

(No. B/116) Mrs A. Navarre-Marie (Fourth Member for GRNW & Port Louis West) asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to student V. R.<sup>5</sup>, she will state if facilities were provided thereto to allow him take part in the forthcoming Cambridge School Certificate Examinations and, if not, why not.

*(Withdrawn)*

# SECONDARY

## EXAMINATIONS

### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

**MAURITIUS EXAMINATIONS SYNDICATE – PSAC, SC & HSC 2021**

**(23.03.2021)**

**(No. B/18) Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand’Baie & Poudre d’Or)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to the Primary School Achievement Certificate, the National Certificate of Education and the Cambridge School Certificate and Higher School Certificate Local Examinations for 2021, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, information as to the number of supervisors, coordinators and invigilators who will be required, indicating –

- (a) the number of applications received therefor and the number of those who have now declined amid the prevalence of COVID-19 cases, and (b) if they will be vaccinated prior to officiating as such.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun):** Mr Speaker, Sir, according to information submitted by the Mauritius Examination Syndicate, details pertaining to supervisors, coordinators and invigilators are as follows –

For the PSAC assessment, the number of coordinators required is 74; the number of persons who have applied is 96; none have declined. Invigilators, number of persons required is 3,008. Number of persons who have applied is 3,750. 25 have declined and have been replaced.

For the NC assessment, the number of supervisors required is 365. The number of persons who have applied for that post is 1,000. Number of persons who have declined is 50 and they have been replaced.

Coordinators, number of persons required is 78. Number of persons who have applied is 300. 40 have declined and have been replaced.

Invigilators, number of persons required is 1,800. Number of persons who have applied is 5,505. None have declined.

For SC and HSC Examinations, number of supervisors required is 225. Number of persons who have applied for that post is 1,677. Number of persons who have declined is 58.

Coordinators, 83 required. 183 persons applied and 3 persons declined.

Invigilators, 3,560 required. Number of persons who have applied is 4,500.

350 persons have declined and have been replaced.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is customary that a number of officers, after having applied to work for examinations, happen to subsequently decline the offer. The MES, however, manages to readily replace them from a backup pool.

I would also wish to inform the House that arrangements have been made for all examination personnel to be vaccinated.

**Dr. Gungapersad:** Hon. Vice-Prime Minister, my main concern is that, because of this pandemic, we need additional number of classrooms where exams will be conducted and in that respect we will need more invigilators to manage the exams. Has this been taken care of?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, while answering to the previous question, I had mentioned that we are following strict sanitary measures and one of the requirements is to have the students placed one metre apart. Bearing this in mind and considering the number of students we have, and the space provided in each school, the MES has done the needful.

**Dr. Gungapersad:** I again would like to insist on this fact that, allowing students in and out of the red zone to take the different exams as well as the different personnel is quite risky, hon. Vice-Prime Minister.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the arrangements made by the Ministry of Land Transport is such that, students moving from one zone to the other go in a bus and the bus remains there and takes the students back to the place from where they have been picked. So, this will reduce the risk or eliminate the risk of their meeting others, etc. and especially when we consider all the sanitary measures that have been adopted at the level of the exam centres, I believe that the risk has been enormously minimised.

**Dr. Gungapersad:** Those who have declined to work during this pandemic, one reassurance that they want is that they would not be penalised subsequently because they could not work

during the pandemic, so that next year and the year after, they are not penalised on the basis that they refused to work during the pandemic.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, this has to be tackled by the MES. I do understand that in a pandemic condition people may have very valid reasons not to be able to attend work or to be present in the exam centres, but I will leave it to the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate to consider its list of exam personnel.

**Mr Speaker:** Last question!

**Dr. Gungapersad:** I think it is our duty here, everyone's duty to reassure all the kids and to say all the best to all the personnel, especially the MES which is working in very difficult circumstances and we wish all the kids all the best for the exams.

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** I thank you for the concern expressed.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question!

# SECONDARY

## EXAMINATIONS

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*YEAR 2021*

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### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

#### LOCAL EXAMINATIONS 2021 - EXAMINATION CENTRES

**(23.03.2021)**

**(No. B/16) Dr. M. Gungapersad (Second Member for Grand' Baie & Poudre d'Or)** asked the Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology whether, in regard to the Primary School Achievement Certificate, the National Certificate of Education and the Cambridge School Certificate and Higher School Certificate Local Examinations for 2021, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, information as to the –

- (a) number of examination centres that will be set up therefor;
- (b) number of students to be accommodated per class, and
- (c) health and safety measures being taken for everyone involved therein.

**The Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun):** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to PQs B/16 and B/62 together as those relates to the conductive examinations and the health and safety and sanitary measures being implemented.

With regard to part (a) of PQ B/16, I am informed by the MES that the total number of examination centres is as follows –

- (a) for PSAC, 346 centres;
- (b) for the NCE, 143 centres, and
- (c) for SC and HSC, 133 and 92 centres, respectively.

As for part (b) of the question, arrangements are being made for candidates to be accommodated in examination rooms in such a way as to allow for a physical distancing of at least 1 metre. On 15 March 2021 during a Press Briefing, I had announced that arrangements

were being made with authorities concerned to enable students to sit for the examinations in the best possible manner and under strict observance of established health, sanitary and safety guidelines and procedures.

With regard to the health and safety measures, I wish to reassure the House that following discussions with various Ministries concerned, strict guidelines have been devised as follows

—

- (a) vaccination of the staff of the MES, Heads of schools, supervisors, invigilators and all other personnel involved in the conductive examinations started on 18 March 2021;
- (b) daily cleaning and disinfection of all examinations centres to be effected and even between examination sessions;
- (c) Public transport facilities have been arranged for all concerned to commute to their examination centres. Transport companies will ensure frequent cleaning and disinfection of their vehicles, allowing sound ventilation so as to eliminate all risks of contamination. All candidates and travellers of the public bus service will have to adhere to specific sanitary measures such as hand sanitising, wearing of masks at all times, physical distancing, amongst others.

In addition, the following measures will be implemented in the examination centres —

- strict control will be effected at the entrance of the examination centre;
- all candidates and examination personnel will be given access to the examination centre upon presentation of their timetables or a pass issued by the MES;
- temperature checks at the entrance of the examination centres will be carried out;
  - all persons having access to the examination centre should wear a mask covering their face and mouth, sanitisation of hands at the entrance of the examination centre will be compulsory;
  - candidates will be directed immediately to their examination room by the examination personnel;
  - candidates will not be allowed to group up on the premises of the examination centre and will be constantly reminded of the need of social distancing of at least one metre at all times;

- the examination rooms will be disinfected between each examination session.

With reference to PQ B/62, I wish to inform the House that all candidates having entered for SC/HSC examinations will normally sit for their examination. Should a candidate be detected with high temperature on arrival, the candidate will be placed in an isolation room and the Ministry of Health and Wellness will be immediately contacted. The candidate will sit for his examination in the isolation room as per the protocol established by the Ministry of Health and Wellness. A candidate in quarantine centre will be allowed to take part in the examinations under strict sanitary and examination conditions. A separate hall will be identified for that purpose. The centre will be designated by the Ministry of Health and Wellness. Candidates tested COVID-19 positive and under treatment will not be allowed to sit for the examinations. However, after having recovered, he/she will be allowed to sit for the examination's remaining papers as may be advised by the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

I also wish to inform the House that libraries and stationary stores were open from 16 to 20 March 2021 to enable students to purchase necessary materials for their practical examinations. Relevant arrangements have also been made for students sitting for Food and Nutrition as well as for Art and Design practical examinations.

**Dr. Gungapersad:** I would request the hon. Minister to inform us whether special consideration has been given as to the mental health of those students who may be unduly stressed, one, because of the exam stress, plus the prevailing pandemic?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Ministry already has a team of psychologists working and whenever it is felt that there is a need for support or whenever there is a demand for that, the Unit will automatically provide support to the students.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Ms Bérenger!

**Ms Bérenger:** Can we know from the hon. Minister, what measures have been taken by her Ministry to ensure accessibility of disabled students to those examinations, please?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we already have a team working on that and whenever there is a request from any student with special education needs, the needful is done by the MES.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Mrs Navarre-Marie!

**Mrs Navarre-Marie:** Merci, M. le président. Concernant le *National Certificate of Education Examination*, la ministre ne pense-t-elle pas que vu la situation actuelle, qu'il serait souhaitable



de renvoyer ces examens à l'année prochaine, cela éviterait une grande circulation d'enfants en ce moment difficile, vu que c'est un examen qui a lieu pour la première fois, personne ne sera pénalisée ?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we have already planned the exams and we have been working under the guidance of the Ministry of Health and Wellness. As for the timing of the exams and the dates, we have made sure that there is no massive movement of students during the examinations. The examinations for SC and HSC will start full-fledged as from 12 April and earlier, that is, from 30 to 08 April, there are only few candidates for SC and HSC who will be going for exams. So, we hope that nothing happens, but then, I assure the House that the number of students that will be circulating during those days is manageable.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Dr. Gungapersad!

**Dr. Gungapersad:** Hon. Minister, I have one concern, I know, the personnel of the MES will take that into consideration. Regarding days when we have two papers, when students have finished the first paper and waiting for the second paper to get into the examination rooms, because we know kids are kids after all, that all measures are taken so that they do not group together in between two papers?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have just mentioned that students will be constantly reminded of the need for social distancing and special rooms will be made available for students to remain in, prior to getting to the next session, under the supervision of an invigilator. However, we do understand that students will need to be constantly reminded of this and will have to be supervised.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Ramful!

**Mr Ramful:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. Just to come back to the last question of my colleague, Dr. Gungapersad, I have been given to understand that on some days there are going to be two papers that are going to be set for the students. Now, given that most of the schools and colleges are regionalised and the students reside near to the schools, will they be allowed at least to go back home during the recess, freshen up and make use of toilet facilities, if need be, and come back and this is going to prevent overcrowding during recess time?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we do not normally advise students to leave the examination centres during examinations, but as I have stated earlier, parents can come and drop their children at school and pick them up. I would rather have students remaining within the school compound, or in the cars, in the time they have to wait before getting into the examination, but it not advisable for students to leave the exam centres for

various reasons. But then, in case the parent is there and let say, for example, has brought the lunch of the student, I think the student can get into the car and have the food, but we will not allow parents to group up or to assemble in the school yards. They will have to be outside the school yard, but I would not advise students to go back home between exams.

**Mr Speaker:** Last supplementary, hon. Ameer Meea!

**Mr Ameer Meea:** Yes, thank you, Mr Speaker, Sir. The hon. Minister announced that for certain grades, there will be no final examination and there will be automatic promotion. And recently, it appeared in the Press that some schools are contemplating to have examination before those students can move to classes. I think it was in the private schools, but I am not sure whether it also applies to Government schools. Can the hon. Minister, please, clarify on this issue?

**Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun:** We have had no such complaints from students, but I must say what we have been saying to schools and to rectors, is to allow students to get promoted to the next year, but obviously, we had also underlined that in case a student is facing a lot of difficulty and has not been working according to the requirements of the school during the year, that child may, on the request of parents or teachers be retained in a class, but by no means we have been asking the schools to carry out tests at this point in time.

**Mr Speaker:** Next question, hon. Dr. Gungapersad!